SCRIPT BITS!
Issue: Sonic the Hedgehog #163 (JUNE'06)
Pages: 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14

Welcome one and all to **Script Bits!** This monthly feature will take roughly forty-five percent of a story in Archie Comic's *Sonic the Hedgehog* and present it to you as insight into the writing process.

Part of the fun of this feature will be comparing what was written and what saw print. Sometimes the vision is tweaked as the artists interpret the script. Sometimes the original idea doesn't work once put on paper and must be adjusted from there. Sometimes the artist has a stroke of genius and does something different than what the script calls for - and it's for the better!

So pull out your copy of *Sonic the Hedgehog* #163 from June of 2006 and get ready to read along!

Remembering "The Darkest Storm" part two

"Onset of the Squall" was a special issue in particular for me since I got a chance to use some old ideas, polish them up, and use them "for real" in the pages of the actual comic.

First let us travel back in time to the days of the 32X, to the days of *Knuckles' Chaotix*, and the days when most of my videogame knowledge came from a school mate and the videogame magazines he'd bring to school on occasion. I don't think I even had a Genesis at this point, folks.

One magazine in particular showed the fantastical game in which Knuckles and a group of specialized animal characters fighting Dr. Robotnik. I was hooked, and while I didn't know a thing about them, they were my new favorite aspect about the Sonic franchise. When the original Knuckles mini-series debuted, I snatched it up purely for the Chaotix.

Like any good fan, I began weaving my own tales of daring-do for this "super team." And what's better than a team of awesome characters? A team of awesome *antithesis* characters, of course! And so I made a group of evil, "Dark" Chaotix and named them the "Destructix." Chaos? Destruction? Suffice of "-tix?" It all made sense.

Fast-forward to today when Mammoth Mogul is being hunted down and freed by his loyal minions. Two new members are with the group and I have intentions of expanding or changing the roster, so the name "Fearsome Foursome" doesn't really apply anymore. All the good six-themed villain team names are taken. What do I call this group of evil Mobians, most of whom were initially modeled to directly combat the Chaotix?

You could practically hear the light bulb turn on over my head.

I consulted Mike Pellerito about it and managed to convince him it was a fine team name. Sure, the line-up of characters is completely different, but the team name and the meaning behind it is still there. I might be coerced into detailing the "original" Destructix on the forum. A little dose of humility never hurt anyone.

The second plot point was something I'd intended for the book for years. The Ixis Mogul connection had seemed apparent to me from almost the beginning. In Mogul's first appearance (*Super Sonic vs. Hyper Knuckles*, I believe) we see a time-line of his various incarnations – one of which is shrouded in purple like Naugus. Given his timelessness and

knack for being the root of something convoluted and evil, I thought it perfectly appropriate to make him the founder of the Order of Ixis.

This was also a measure to bring Naugus into line. Naugus had been shown to be quite powerful at times where Mogul had (unfortunately) mostly followed in the stead of the Fearsome Foursome and gotten his butt whupped despite all his potential (*Sonic the Hedgehog* #56 notwithstanding). The wizard duel of this issue was meant to reaffirm that Mogul was a viable threat and to present a plausible reason why the viciously egomaniacal Naugus would submit to anyone.

Ever since the "Hunt for Naugus" arc I've wanted to investigate the history of the Order of Ixis, the horrors of the Forgotten Wars and how it all might tie into the Days of Fury. Sadly, it doesn't look like we'll have much of a chance to do so in the near (or foreseeable) future. Because of that, I put in one little "teaser" of my thoughts – the Albion Knights of Aurora.

The reasoning behind the enigmatic knights was that the Order of Ixis were created before the rest of Mobius had much of a social structure. I'm sure there were small villages – maybe event he first foundations of the kingdoms – but nothing that could stand against the Order. Who could fend off such a threat? Albion was the only civilization with the capacity to drive them back, and given its tie (in name at least) to the fabled land of King Arthur, I thought it fitting to have them be the opposing force to the dark Order.

This issue also marks the end of Mecha "M" Robotnik. Believe it or not, I actually fought for preserving her - a little. I thought the becoming exterior coupled with a cold, merciless interior and a homicidal devotion to her "father" made M a spooky character. But M was put on the chopping block, so chop her I did. She received a bit of mercy in the revision process though: in Ixis Naugus's entrance his initial attack was to use a fireball to blow M's face off. Realizing she was a robot due to her shiny metal skull; he went on to freeze her. The fireball was nixed, so we got suffocation instead. Then, with her self-destruction, I purposefully aimed for it to be both sad and unsettling. The art team did a great job of rendering the scene as exactly that.

I was able to honor everyone's request this month and have two personal picks of my own. We have the opening two-page sequence (my personal favorite), Nack's escape from prison and subtle plans for triple homicide, the big ol' throw-down, the death of M, and the history of the Order of Ixis.

PAGE ONE

PANEL 1: 2/3rds of the page. Castle Acorn - the throne room. MAMMOTH MOGUL stands in the center. A thin, wispy, fiery aura of green energy is just leaving his massive form. Surrounding him are:
SONIC
TAILS
MERLIN PROWER (see Sonic Live! Special)
SIR CONNERY (see S#45)
BUNNIE
ANTOINE
SALLY
ELIAS
FIONA

While all of them are in the shot, make sure we get the best look of SONIC, TAILS, MERLIN and CONNERY. Everyone is in a state of surprised shock to see MOGUL free. MOGUL glares back at them with a reserved, smoldering hatred. Be sure to play up on the fact that MOGUL is easily double the average size of anyone else present. Perhaps set the title and credits to a top corner of the PANEL.

TITLE

THE DARKEST STORM
PART TWO: ONSET OF THE SQUALL

CREDITS

Writer: IAN "POTTO" FLYNN
Pencils:
Inks:
Colors:
Letters:
Editor: MIKE PELLERITO
Managing Editor: VICTOR GORELICK
Editor-in-Chief: RICHARD GOLDWATER
Special thanks to: _____ at Sega Licensing

TEXT BOX (green - Anonymous)
I am called **Anonymous**

TEXT BOX (green - Anonymous - descending from last box)
I have catalogued every major threat to **Sonic the Hedgehog**

TEXT BOX (green - Anonymous - descending from last box)
I will ensure the most powerful one remains . . .

TEXT BOX (green - Anonymous - descending from last box)
So that I may **destroy him.**

TEXT BOX (green - Anonymous - descending from last box)
The first contender is -

SONIC
Mammoth Mogul!

PANEL 2: Aligned to the left side under PANEL 1. TAILS grimly leads the charge. SONIC wears his ever-confident grin as he helps lead the charge. We can see a few other FREEDOM FIGHTERS following their lead. MERLIN recoils, obviously horrified.

TAILS
We have to take him down **quick!**

SONIC
Like I'd do it any other way.

MERLIN
Oh merciful Chaos Force . . .!

PANEL 3: Aligned to the right side under PANEL 1. In the background we see the FREEDOM FIGHTERS attack MOGUL on all sides, the latter of which isn't moving. Each blow near him is blocked by a thin, localized shield of transparent, green energy. Foreground: MERLIN and CONNERY exchange terrified looks.

CONNERY
Merlin! If Mogul is free, then that means . . .

MERLIN
I'm afraid so, Sir Connery!

PAGE TWO

PANEL 1: Long, narrow panel. MOGUL is to the left side of the panel, glaring straight ahead. The right side of the panel is filled with SONIC, TAILS, FIONA and ANTOINE attacking. A luminous green energy barrier blocks their assaults.

TEXT BOX (orange - Merlin)
The **Ancient Walkers** are **dead!**

SONIC
What's with the shield, chubby?
Not such a big-shot when you don't have so much Chaos energy?

PANEL 2: Equally long, narrow panel as the last one. MOGUL is to the right side of the panel, still glaring straight ahead, still kept safe by a luminous green energy barrier. The left side of the panel is filled with the attacking BUNNIE, SALLY, ELIAS and CONNERY. Note that CONNERY should be the furthest behind, looking like he's joined the attack late.

CONNERY
You will rue the day you slew the noblest beings to grace Mobius!

PANEL 3: Centralized panel with jagged edges. NOT like a burst-balloon for dialogue, but rough and jagged to make us feel the pain of the contained action. MOGUL is at center, defined only by brilliant green shading. The rest is white fading to green on the edges. We can see his chaos emerald at what would be his chest. The fading silhouettes of our heroes (all of them) are seen being tossed back. Think of it as MOGUL just went off like a bomb.

SFX (large, outline only text, green, arching and jagged)
ZORTCH!

PANEL 4: 3/4ths aerial view of the throne room. MOGUL stands like he always has with a blackened blast mark radiating around his feet. We see the bodies of most (if not all) of our heroes laid out with thin wisps of smoke coming off them.

PANEL 5: We see ELIAS's crumpled form on the floor, the last of the smoke evaporating from him. The CROWN OF ACORNS lies near his body. We see MOGUL's shadow (clearly defined) fall over him.

PANEL 6: A shot of MOGUL from about the middle of his chest and up. He holds the CROWN OF ACORNS in his hand and smiles evilly at it. It gains its own thin, fiery, green aura like the one MOGUL lost back on Page 1/panel 1.

PAGE SIX

PANEL 1 - Prison interior. NACK peers from his cell out the hole in the other cell.

NACK
Wow . . .
Looks like something major is going on down there!

PANEL 2 - NACK squeezes through between the bars with a delighted grimace. His hat pops off his head into the hall.

NACK
Which means now is as good as ever to get out!
Heh
Like some measly bars could keep me in.

PANEL 3 - NACK peers down the prison hall, dusting off his hat. He smiles devilishly.

NACK
I think I'll hit the kitchen on my way out and leave my former gang buddies a little "gift."

PANEL 4 - Close-up on NACK's sinister smile as he puts his hat back on.

NACK
It'll be bad enough with the good guys on my trail.
They don't need the competition.

PANEL 5 - NACK darts down the hallway.

PAGE EIGHT

Splash Panel - This is tricky because we're going for a full page of fighting, so it needs to be over-the-top and amazing. On the other-hand, it can't be too cluttered or confusing.

Here's how I'm visualizing it, but if you come up with something better, please share. We'll probably go with that.
Reference to the page is divided like so:

Top 1/5th	**-**	**Extreme background**
Top-Mid 1/5th	**-**	**Background**
Middle 1/5th	**-**	**Middle ground**
Top-Low 1/5th	**-**	**Foreground**
Bottom 1/5th	**-**	**Extreme foreground**

Extreme background:
HAWK vs. TAILS & CHARMY & RAY & SAPHRON (HAWK exchanges angry looks with TAILS as the heroes swarm about him)

Background:
MOGUL vs. NAUGUS (SWORD and CROWN blazing with white and green fiery auras [respectively] - SWORD and Mogul's cane clash)
MERLIN - CONNERY (each making an attempt to attack but being zapped by NAUGUS and MOGUL, respectively)

Middle ground:
BUNNIE and MIGHTY vs. SIMIAN (SIMIAN palm's MIGHTY'S head, but MIGHTY is rearing back to punch anyway. As SIMIAN readies his own punch, BUNNIE strains to hold him back by the wrist)
VECTOR vs. FROG (languid)
ESPIO vs. LYNX vs. SPIDER KID (this is primarily Espio against Lynx. This one should look the fiercest of any pairings)

Foreground:
FIONA vs. DRAGO (Fiona is the obvious winner here, show it)
ANTOINE vs. SPIDER KID (weapons clash)
SALLY & ELIAS vs. SLEUTH & SPIDER KID (SLEUTH has SALLY by the arm, but she faces him and looks pissed, ELIAS locks weapons with KID - see his "battle stirrups" on the cover of S#70)

Extreme Foreground:
SONIC & KNUCKLES, back-to-back, each take on a SPIDER KID

> TEXT BOX (green - Anonymous)
> Sweet, sweet discord and strife.

<u>PAGE NINE</u>

PANEL 1: The Egg Grape chamber. EGGMAN stands on the catwalk and glares at the empty support rods and their branches. A screen imbedded in the wall behind him is black save for the HAL-2000-like green eye displayed there. That is ADAM. MECHA can be seen returning to them looking normal.

TEXT BOX (green - Anonymous)
Now, to move the final player.

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
I have finished my analysis, father.

EGGMAN
And?

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
Only the occupied Egg Grapes were lost to the Zone of Silence.
You retain all of your non-occupied Egg Grapes.

EGGMAN
For what good it does me right now.

PANEL 2: Family photo of sorts. EGGMAN on the left, MECHA on the right, ADAM in the middle. EGGMAN and MECHA exchange pleasant smiles.

EGGMAN
Feeling better, dear?

MECHA
Yes, father. I am back at peak efficiency.

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
I have determined how the spider ninjas infiltrated this area.
I also determined who orchestrated all of this.

EGGMAN
Excellent!
Give us the details, A.D.A.M.

PANEL 3: Same set up as last PANEL. EGGMAN and MECHA look over sharply to ADAM's screen.

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
I have found proof that the fault lies with **Anonymous . . .**
With the help of **Mecha.**

EGGMAN
WHAT?!

MECHA
That . . . that is not true!

PANEL 4: Close-up on the screen/ADAM. We get the video recording of MECHA meeting with ANONYMOUS. The latter should give us a very vague shape of classic Dr. Robotnik (see: S#50). The edges should blur and show static - showing us his form has been deleted from the tape.

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
I have proof.
Watch.

ANONYMOUS (static balloon from his figure on the screen)
I have organized the orphaned children of Uma Arachnis.
They are still honor-bound to serve Ixis Naugus.

MECHA (static balloon from her figure on the screen)
Good. I will remotely trigger the Egg Grapes at the right time.
My father will be out of the way and we can rule, Anonymous.
(NOTE: "Anonymous" [the word] in her dialogue should be of a different font, boldness, and looks slightly out of place).

PANEL 5: We can see MECHA recoiling in the foreground, backing out of view. EGGMAN is trembling with fury, fists clenched at his sides. They're all bad-guys, but we should feel sorry for MECHA - EGGMAN looks like he's about to explode. We can barely see ADAM's screen.

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
I am sorry, father, that I could not record **who** Anonymous is.
He used some kind of field that corrupted my data.

EGGMAN
M . . .

<u>PAGE TEN</u>
PANEL 1: Opposite composition of Page 9 / Panel 5. MECHA backs away, horrified and grief-stricken. Yes, give her a full range of emotion here. She backs up, hands up. EGGMAN looms into the extreme foreground. ADAM's screen is barely visible.

MECHA
Father, no!
A.D.A.M. is . . . lying!

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
I cannot lie.
I analyze and process.

EGGMAN (bold, burst balloon)
Mecha "M" Robotnik!

MECHA (small text, average balloon)
. . . yes father? . . .

PANEL 2: EGGMAN leans in, looming over her, shouting at the top of his lungs. Spittle flying is your call. MECHA looks devastated. They are both in profile.

EGGMAN
Initiate self-destruct **now!**

MECHA
B-But f-f-father . . .

EGGMAN
DO IT!

PANEL 3: MECHA bows her head, looking like she is weeping. Blue smoke pours from beneath her shades and from key joints - shoulders, elbows, knees, hips, around her neck.

SFX (numerous, all around MECHA)
kzzt!

PANEL 4: EGGMAN turns away, glaring. We can see ADAM's screen. MECHA erupts into blue flame, a thick cloud of the acrid, blue smoke billowing from her crumpling form. We can see mostly the metal skeleton now with sparks leaping about her limbs.

EGGMAN
A.D.A.M.

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
Yes, father?
EGGMAN
Delete all back-ups of Mecha Robotnik's data.
I don't want her coming back.

ADAM (green, square bubble with static tail - from screen)
Yes father.

PANEL 5: EGGMAN stands with his back to us in the background. A crumpled pile of unidentifiable metal bits spark and flame blue, the smoke tapering off. We see half of MECHA's metallic skull disintegrating. Give the remaining eye-socket a sad look.

EGGMAN
And annihilate Project: Metal Snively.*
No more of this henchmen nonsense.
Hunter couldn't bother to survive an drop into the ocean.**

My own daughter betrays me.
No more of it.

EDITOR'S NOTE (small and to one corner)
*S#140
**S#141

PAGE FOURTEEN

PANEL 1: Head-shot of MOGUL as he looks upon the rescue at a distance. He sneers. SONIC and KNUCKLES can be seen setting MERLIN and CONNERY to their feet. Near-by, SALLY flip-kicks a SPIDER KID that was about to jump ELIAS from behind.

NAUGUS (from off-PANEL)
Y-You . . .

PANEL 2: MOGUL turns to NAUGUS, who weakly gets to his feet. The crystalline nature of his human arm shatters and flakes off, revealing his normal arm. NAUGUS points to MOGUL with his claw, wide-eyed.

NAUGUS
You with a mastery of the Ixis magicks . . .
You who called it **your** order . . .
Can it be? Are you truly . . .?

MOGUL
Yes. But that was long, long ago.

PANEL 3: Flashback. Rounder, softer borders to these panels. We also get the "flashback colors" (see S#57) We see MOGUL in his cave-man attire (see Mecha Madness Special) limping away from an angry mob of various mobians in similar clothing.

TEXT BOX (green - Mogul)
I once ruled Mobius, but with an ignorant control of my power.
An ignorance that led to my downfall.*

EDITOR'S NOTE (small and to one corner)
*Mecha Madness Special

PANEL 4: Flashback continues. MOGUL in a cape much like NAUGUS's casts spells in the moonlight. We see tendrils of flame, water, wind and earth spiraling into a crystal sphere.

TEXT BOX (green - Mogul)

I learned the basic principles of my power - the very essence of nature - and grew wise and powerful.

TEXT BOX (green - Mogul)
Such power drew the attention of other eager minds and those who would serve me.

PANEL 5: Flashback continues. MOGUL in his Ixis cloak stands, aghast, as other similarly dressed Ixis sorcerers of various species drop. We can see echidnas in what looks like medieval suits of amour realized by TRON advancing on him and his remaining troops. It's a battlefield, and jets of flame and laser shoot back and forth over the fallen.

TEXT BOX (green - Mogul)
But my Order of Ixis was not meant to be.

TEXT BOX (Mogul)
Our bid for world domination was crushed during the Forgotten War with the Albion Knights of Aurora.

PANEL 6: Present day. We're sitting on NAUGUS's shoulder. He looks up in awe at the looming MOGUL. He partially obscures the sun, casting a dramatic shadow upon himself.

MOGUL
I thought all of my followers had been eradicated in that confrontation.
I see that at least one has remained.

NAUGUS
Then it's true!
Your power, your knowledge, it must mean . . .!

MOGUL
Yes, Naugus. I was once known as
Ixis Mogul (archaic, fancy text)

Remembering "Sonic Riders" part one
Pages: 2, 4, 6

Originally entitled "In on a Gale," this story was meant to be a bare-bones adaptation that was true to both the current continuity and the SegaSonic material. This was rather tricky since we didn't have much to work with in terms of in-game information.

We were lucky in that a gaming magazine printed some small full-body shots of the characters and some short biographies. We found all the airboard designs on the Japanese site. Then the incomplete anime intro-trailer hit the net. I thought with all that we would be on track.

What wasn't included was the airship or anything about Babylon Garden, so the Rogues' recruitment by Dr. Eggman was as close to what I thought they'd do as could be inferred. The most notable diversion from the source material was the personalities.

The mini-bio's provided painted Jet as a dashing pirate leader – not the selfish, cocky, immature jerk that he is.

Storm was called a "force of nature" and all his character art had him as a scary mountain of a bird. I thought he'd be the grim enforcer of Jet – someone brought in to break some kneecaps. Instead we got a bumbling idiot.

Wave's character wasn't really hinted at all and all we knew was she was a great engineer. If only I had known she was the brains of the team, the true source of logic and order, as well an and A-class b . . . "bat." (StH#165 joke there).

Should we ever return to the Babylon Rogues, they'll be closer to their source material. Until then you can enjoy the gorgeous art and the witty banter.

The pages include the deal with Dr. Eggman, Sonic making fun of the birds, and the big debut of all three.

PAGE TWO

PANEL 1 - Eggman's Lab. Blinky consoles dominate the room. There's alot of garish, rounded internal architecture. JET sits, arms cross, in a clear prison egg. It has a high-tech looking base and cap to the "egg" while the rest is clear. It's big enough for JET to stand in. EGGMAN is in the foreground, inspecting the BOARD.

EGGMAN
So you thought you could steal my **vapor accelerator,** did you?
I suppose you planned to upgrade you airboard?

JET
Hey, times have been tough since I quit the Armada.

PANEL 2 - We sit on JET's shoulder from within the prison egg. We watch EGGMAN try to stand on the BOARD, wobbling. The BOARD hovers a few inches off the ground.

EGGMAN
This is a remarkable device!
You were going as fast as **Sonic** on this!
(small - an aside) If only he'd run into an Egg Hammer...

JET
Who's this Sonic guy?

PANEL 3 - EGGMAN holds the BOARD like a surfer and leans in to look at JET. EGGMAN looks surprised. JET scowls and is indignant.

EGGMAN
Sonic the Hedgehog?
Fastest thing alive?
Hero of Mobius?

JET

Never heard of the fraud.
I'm the fastest guy around.
And I'll make sure this Sonic guy **remembers** it.

PANEL 4 - The glass "egg" of the prison raises into the air. If you can fit it into the scene, the high-tech cap has glowing panels to denote anti-gravity motors. JET is surprised and steps out. EGGMAN hands JET the BOARD.

EGGMAN
I like that attitude.
Tell you what - you work for me and rough up Sonic, and I won't kill you.
Deal?

PANEL 5 - Close-up on JET's villainous smirk.

JET
Sounds like a plan.
Can I bring some friends?

PAGE FOUR

PANEL 1 - Long panel. SONIC takes the foreground, arms swept back as he runs at top speed. JET flies right next to him, background, on his BOARD. They both look ahead, smirking confidently. The background is reduced to a blur.

SONIC
Dr. Eggman has new slow-pokes for lackeys, huh?

JET
You're already breaking a sweat, **snail.**

PANEL 2 - We are behind SONIC. JET cuts ahead and thumbs his nose (beak) at SONIC.

JET
After I beat you, we'll move on to Knothole.
If you can **keep up** we'll let you watch.

PANEL 3 - Reverse the "camera" so that we're looking back on JET from the front. JET is wide-eyed, still in his mocking pose. SONIC has surged past and now is in the foreground. SONIC looks back over his shoulder at JET, droll and amused.

SONIC
You're all talk and no speed, bird-boy.

PANEL 4 - The camera "pans back" so that STORM's side and fist loom into the scene. SONIC is still looking back on JET, mocking. JET (if you can fit him in) smirks wickedly - he sees STORM.

SONIC
Did you seriously think you could top the fastest hedgehog on Mobius?

PAGE SIX

SPLASH PANEL - SONIC takes the foreground, still sprawled on the ground as he looks up at his attackers. JET stands center on his BOARD, arms crossed, and glares at SONIC. STORM stands at left, holding his BOARD at his side. WAVE stands at right, holding her BOARD in her opposite arm (from STORM).

Please leave at least 1/5th of the page open at the bottom for the INDICIA and teaser.

STORM
Storm the Albatross

JET
Jet the Hawk

WAVE
Wave the Swallow

JET
We're the Babylon Rogues.

TEASER
NEXT MONTH: How can SONIC keep up with the BABYLON ROGUES? Maybe with a little help from his friends!

INDICIA